

ISSUE: Should agricultural and wetlands diversion screening be an element of the South Delta Improvements EIS/EIR or the Ecosystem and Floodplain Restoration EIS/EIR?

RECOMMENDATION: The South Delta Improvement (SDI) team recommends that the Small Group Policy representatives concur with the following team agreement about partitioning agricultural and wetland screening elements between the SDI Program EIS/EIR and the Ecosystem and Floodplain Restoration EIS/EIR.

- **SDI Program EIS/EIR screening**
 1. Diversions that are modified, extended, or relocated during implementation of the SDI Program (SDIP). Estimated geographic extent of this screening is expected to include:
 - a. diversions in Grant Line Canal, and
 - b. diversions affected by reduced stages
 2. Screening required to off-set impacts to listed species resulting from implementation of the SDIP.
- **Ecosystem and Floodplain Restoration EIS/EIR screening**
 1. Diversions that would be screened on a voluntary basis to achieve the goals of the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan (ERPP).

Rationale

1. *The ERPP calls for targeted research in Stage I to evaluate the need to screen small diversions in the Delta. Preliminary steps toward completing this research have been funded through the Category III. Subsequent voluntary consolidation and screening of small diversions in the Delta not directly affected by the SDIP should be the responsibility of the ERPP.*
2. *The ERPP EIR/EIS will take about two years longer to complete than the SDIP EIR/EIS. However, the design and construction of SDIP will take three years longer than the ERPP agricultural screen design and installation. Folding the ERPP screening into SDIP will delay finalizing both ERPP screening and SDIP implementation.*
3. *Diversions modified as a result of SDIP implementation will be screened per Fish and Game Code. These diversions can become part of the monitoring program needed to implement ERPP while the ERPP EIR/EIS is being finalized.*
4. *The separation of screening responsibilities will a) allow for tracking of expenditures associated with mitigation for the SDIP versus expenditures associated strictly with ERPP implementation; and b) allow screening under separate programs to begin earlier than screening under a combined program. Separating the voluntary screening program from SDIP will allow both programs to be completed in a more timely manner.*
5. *Determining the extent and priority of screening necessary will require monitoring and development of effectiveness and performance criteria for Delta diversion screens, a process expected to take several years. Until monitoring is done, actual sites and impacts of the small diversion screening aspects of both EIS/EIRs can only be estimated at a programmatic level.*